

Matthew at the Buffalo and Erie County Workforce Development Consortium Health Professions Collaborative

Matthew was in a horrible car accident, which left him dependent on Supplemental Security Income, Medicaid, and Food Stamps and unable to work for a long time. At 29 years old, he dreamed of an opportunity to do something meaningful with his life.

In the early spring of 2012, Matthew responded to a flyer for the Pharmacy Technician training program at Erie Community College. Erie Community College is a key partner of the Buffalo and Erie County Workforce Development Consortium, one of 32 Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance. He did not know what to expect but was looking for opportunities. He was receiving public assistance and wanted his independence. He had always liked chemistry, and pharmacy was a respected field, so he gave the training program a try.

He was pleasantly surprised to find out that the training was a "real class." It was more like a condensed college course than other training courses he had attended in the past. Matt did well with the classroom instruction and was able to meet the expectations required in the course, but he really began to shine as a Pharmacy Technician intern at Ivylea Prescription and Home Health Care Center. His internship experience introduced him to positive role models who encouraged him to pursue an education in pharmacy.

Matthew was eager to please and impressed his supervising pharmacist with the skills he had learned in class. As a result of his positive attitude and capabilities, he was hired on a part-time basis at Ivylea, where he continued to build his knowledge of pharmacy and professional relationships.

Currently, he is still employed full time at Ivy Lea Pharmacy and attending Erie Community College at night, maintaining an outstanding grade point average. Matthew views Pharmacy Technician as the "first step on the career ladder," and he is excited about the future opportunities. His goal now is to get into University of Buffalo School of Pharmacy and become a Pharmacist. He feels that the HPOG program was a life-changing experience for him.

**Lindsay at Buffalo and Erie County Workforce Development Consortium
Health Professions Collaborative**

Lindsay is a 23-year-old single mother with a 10-month-old baby. Over the past five years, she had been receiving social service benefits while working part time as a waitress. That all began to change in September 2011. Lindsay started out by visiting Erie 1 BOCES to find out about phlebotomy training. She was disappointed to learn training did not begin until February 2012, but she received information about medical office and medical billing programs.

Still interested in pursuing a health care occupation, Lindsay visited the Buffalo Employment and Training Center next. There she impressed the staff with her wonderful personality and commitment to finding a good career. Testing allowed her to demonstrate her strong typing skills, which led to a referral to medical billing training. The availability and timing of that training was much better.

She started medical billing training in October and finished the following February. Two weeks after completing training, she was hired at Buffalo MRI as a Medical Biller at \$13.00 per hour.

Lindsay enjoyed her training and loves her work, and her employer loves her right back. In October 2012, she will begin a certification course, which will lead to an increase in pay. She is proud that, as a result of her HPOG experience, she is now able to support herself and her son without social service benefits. She stated that HPOG changed her life. Her long-term goal is to continue her education to become an RN.